

Mentor's Introduction to Andrew Tegarden

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It is my pleasure and honor to introduce Andrew Tegarden, ABD and his doctoral research, which drives us to consider the scope and weight of “curriculum work” as an act of citizenship. The term curriculum often gets framed by adopted educational policies, mainstream ideas of cognition and psychology, and other accepted hetero-norms of education related research realms. As such, it is in constant danger of becoming limited in its possibilities of inclusion by art educators keeping to the “safest” common denominator in designing curriculum. Andrew’s work is important to read because of the ways in which it pushes against limitations of the connoted safety of the least problematic curriculum, and instead considers and centers strong citizenship and its attendant discourses as most valuable in considering curriculum work.

In this dissertation, Andrew layers theories and practices of socially engaged art education with contemporary curriculum theory within a case study that considers border monuments as curricular objects or prompts. Working dialogically with elementary school students, undergraduate college students, and broader publics, Andrew prompts a place-based examination of what artifacts within the public sphere might be considered as border monuments. In doing so, he demonstrates the importance of seeing children and youth as an

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intrinsic part of the public, and encouraging them to see themselves as active citizens in the present and the future, rather than receptacles of pre-defined, hegemonic knowledge. To me, this mode of considering curriculum work is the most significant aspect of his research.

Andrew's writing is exploratory, an example of authentic research processes, as it seeks an understanding of the ways in which one can act as a socially engaged artist and simultaneously be thoughtful about how that work creates and enacts curriculum. In doing so it acknowledges how definitions and framings of both socially engaged art and curriculum are evolving variable decisions rather than static and pre-determined truths. There is a vulnerability to this exploration that resonates with the lived experiences of socially engaged artists and art educators grappling with critical socially and culturally relevant subjects. This writing makes the research process more real and relatable for novice and experienced art educators, researchers, and mentors. For these reasons, I advocate for Andrew's dissertation research as a must-read and look forward, not only to the completed documentation of this research, but his further explorations and articulations in what I am certain will be an illustrious and inspiring career.